



Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

Reconstruction of Commonwealth Avenue Phases 3 & 4 Packard's Corner to Kelton Street



Community
Meeting
October 27, 2015



Michael D. Dennehy
Interim Commissioner

Project Limits – Phases 3 & 4



Guiding Principles



Livable



Walkable



Multimoda
|



Green

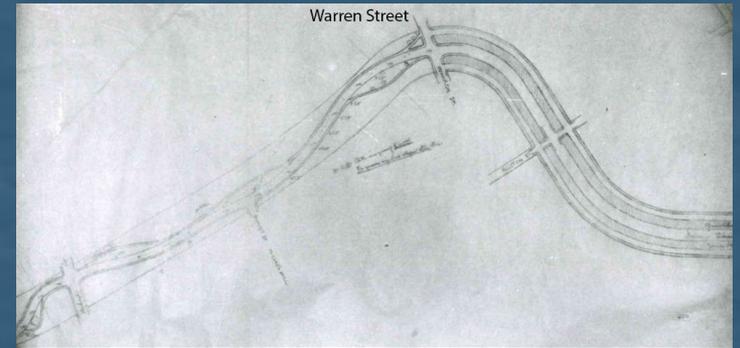


Sustainabl
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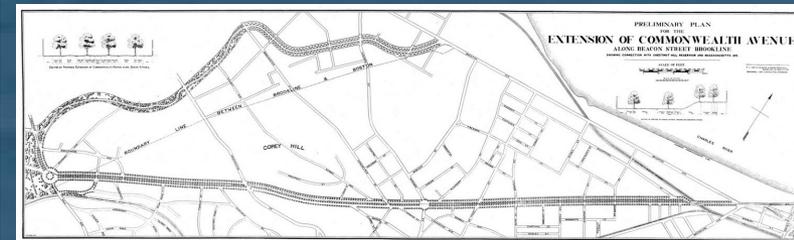
Commonwealth Avenue History



1885 map showing the plan for Commonwealth Ave.



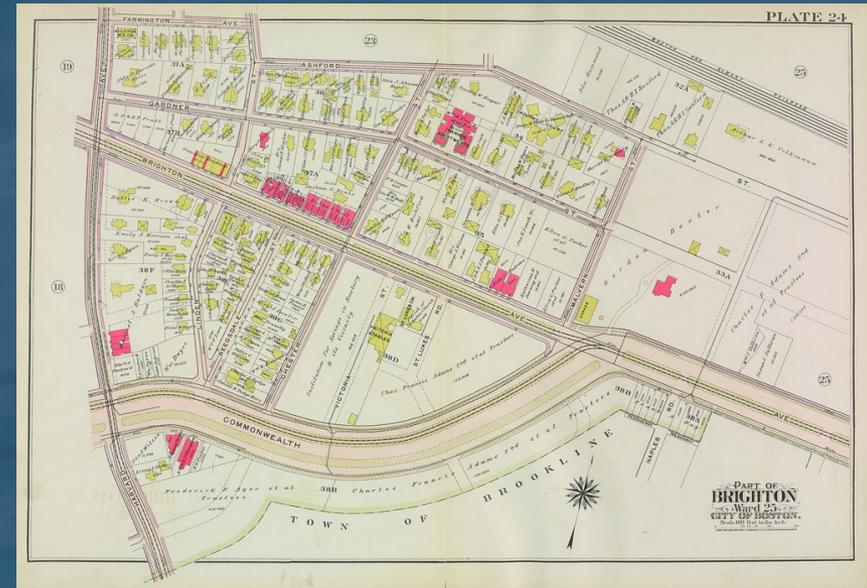
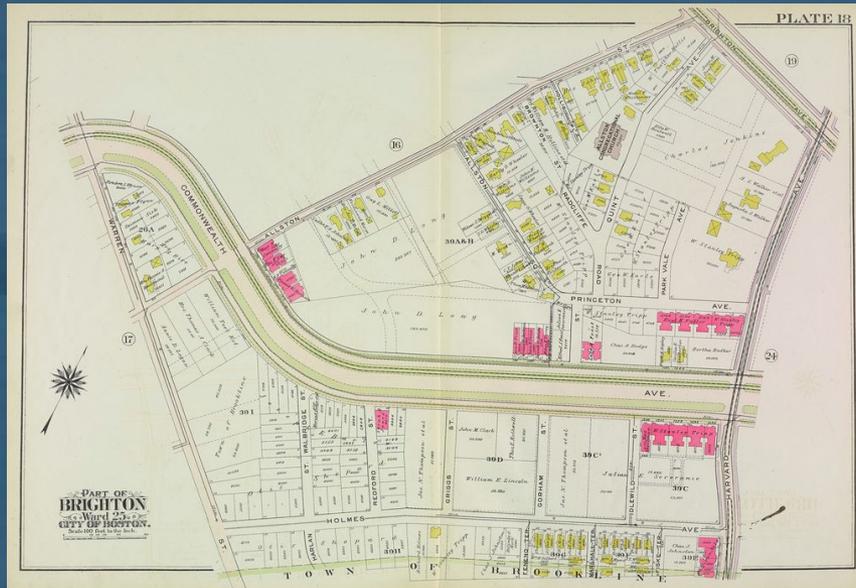
Olmsted Sr. sketch of Commonwealth Ave.



Olmsted's Commonwealth Ave. Extension

- The overall design for Commonwealth Avenue was provided by Frederick Law Olmsted. Originally called Massachusetts Avenue, the name was changed in 1887 when the widening of old Brighton Avenue (portion between Packard's Corner and Kenmore Sq.) linked the roadway to Commonwealth Ave. in the Back Bay.

Commonwealth Avenue History



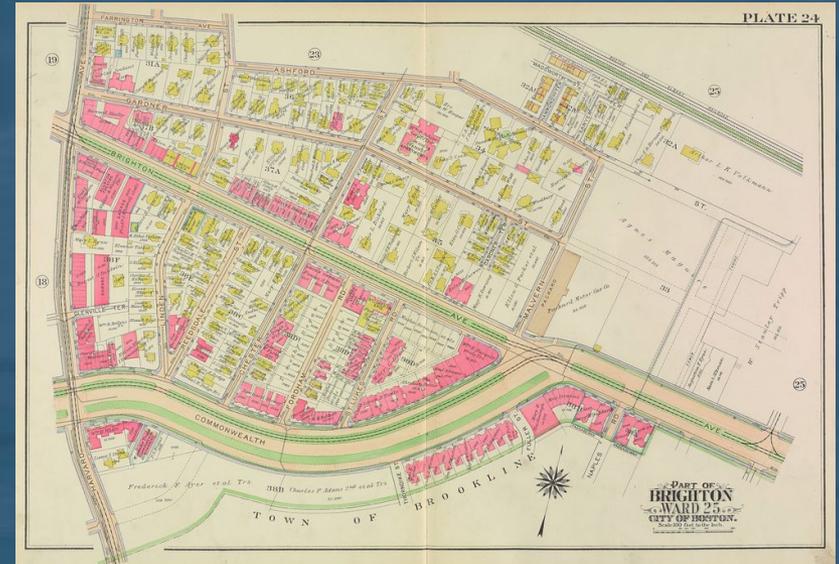
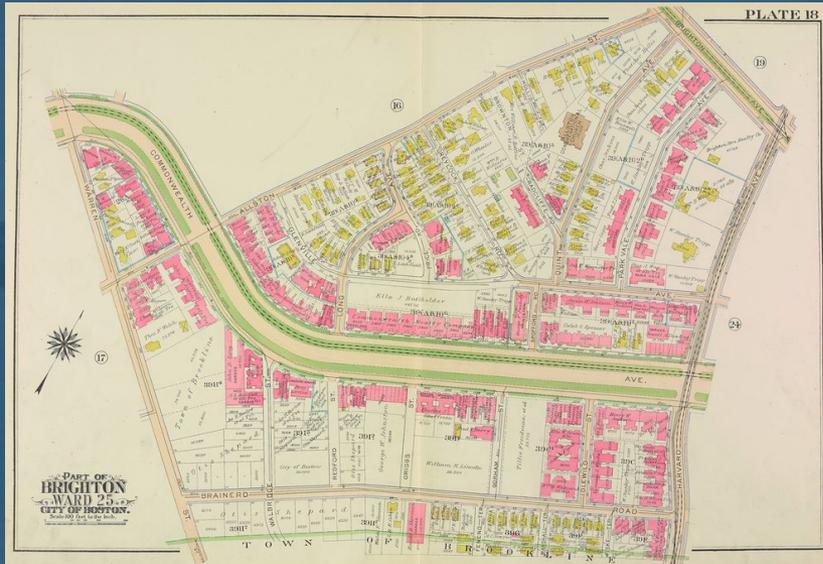
1909

Development along the corridor didn't begin until after 1892 when the city installed amenities such as sewers, utilities and easier access to adjacent real estate.

However, the depression of 1893 destroyed the real estate market and kept development to a minimum.



Commonwealth Avenue History

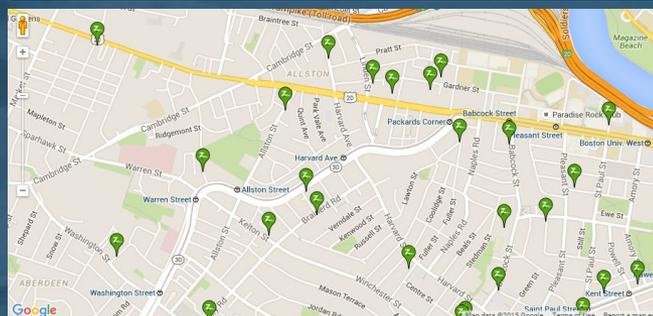
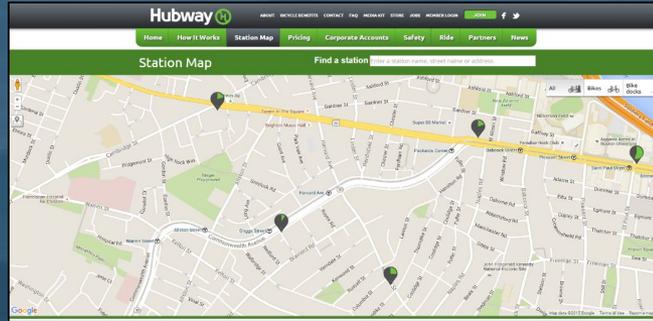


1916



The electric trolley was introduced to Commonwealth Ave. in 1909 and development finally intensified as a result.

New Urban Lifestyles



- Parking Apps
- Smart Meters
- Hubway
- Zipcars
- Uber
- Parklets

Commonwealth Avenue Development



Key Discussion Points



– Basic Cross Section

- Transportation
 - *MBTA*
 - *Bicycle*
 - *Pedestrian*
 - *Vehicular*
- Urban/Design Landscape

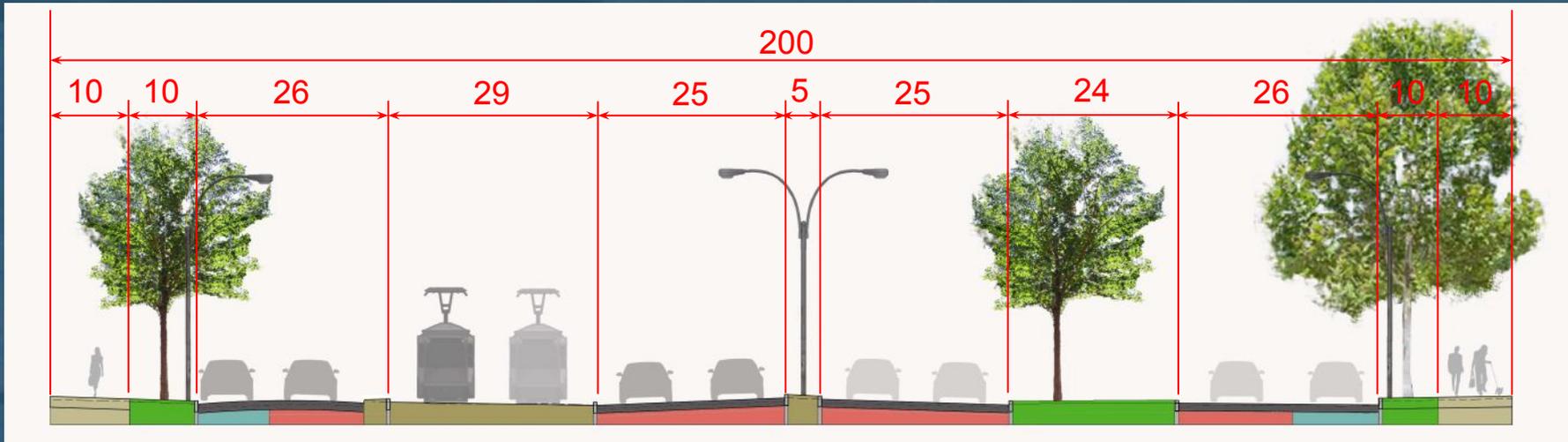


– Key Intersections

- Packard's Corner
- Harvard Avenue

Commonwealth Avenue Existing Section

(looking east – dimensions in feet)



Design Considerations



- Multi-Modal Transportation
- Placemaking
- 21st Century Urban Lifestyles
- Accessibility
- Historic Preservation & Restoration
- Sustainability and Greening

Basic Cross-Section: **MBTA**



Discussions:

- Station Consolidation (City took lead in performing preliminary analysis)
- Accessibility Upgrades
- Mechanics, Funding and Timing of a potential Joint Project

Status:

- A number of challenges to fully meeting accessibility and station consolidation goals – *will be major \$\$\$*
- City project can progress and not preclude future MBTA station improvements

Basic Cross-Section: **MBTA**

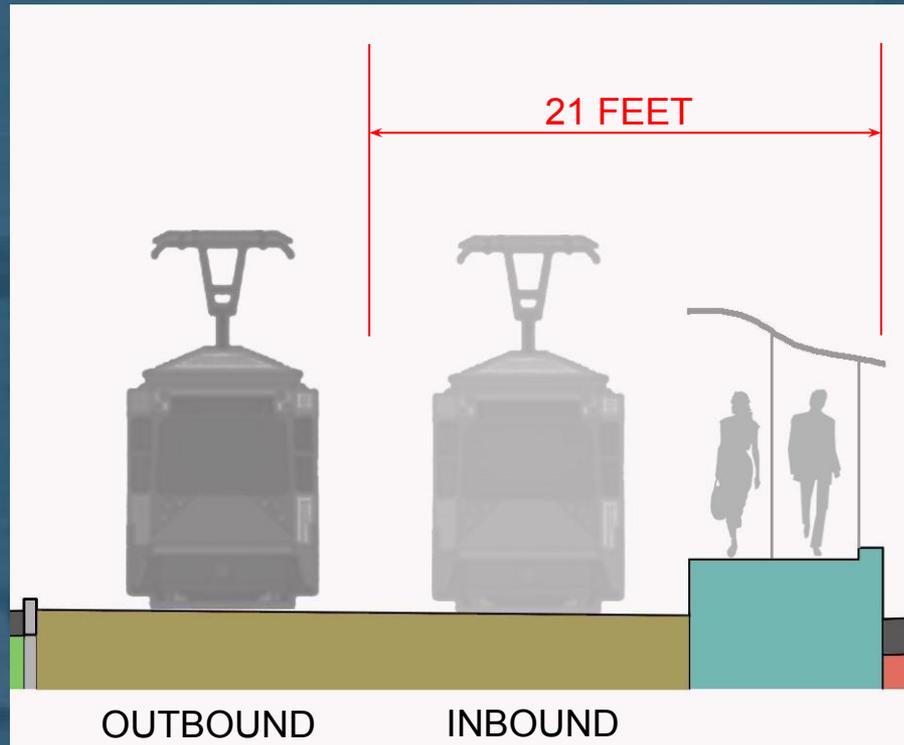
Inbound Track :

- Establish the new curb 21' from MBTA centerline
- Generally 6.5' from where it is today
- Roadway shifts toward **south** (and narrows) 



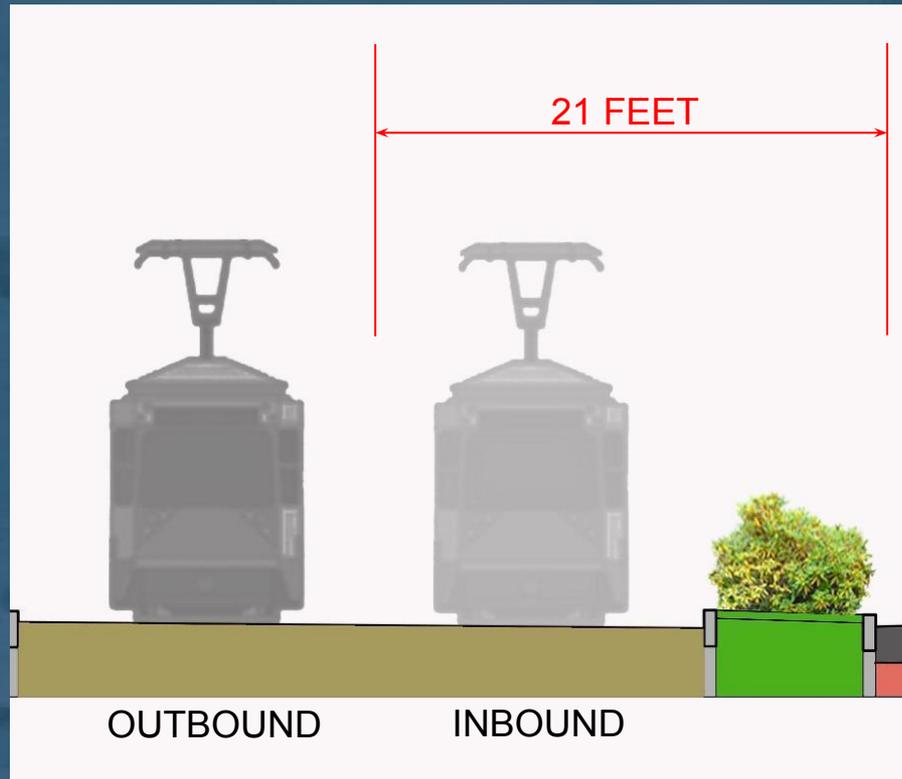
WHY?

Basic Cross-Section: **MBTA**



- Inbound Track:**
- Allows existing platforms to be widened; or new accessible platforms at any location
 - Allows secondary egress walkways at any location

Basic Cross-Section: **MBTA**



Inbound Track:

- Allows existing platforms to be widened; or new accessible platforms at any location
- Allows secondary egress walkways at any location
- Provides room for landscape buffer at all other locations (contributes to “greening” goal)

Basic Cross-Section: **MBTA**

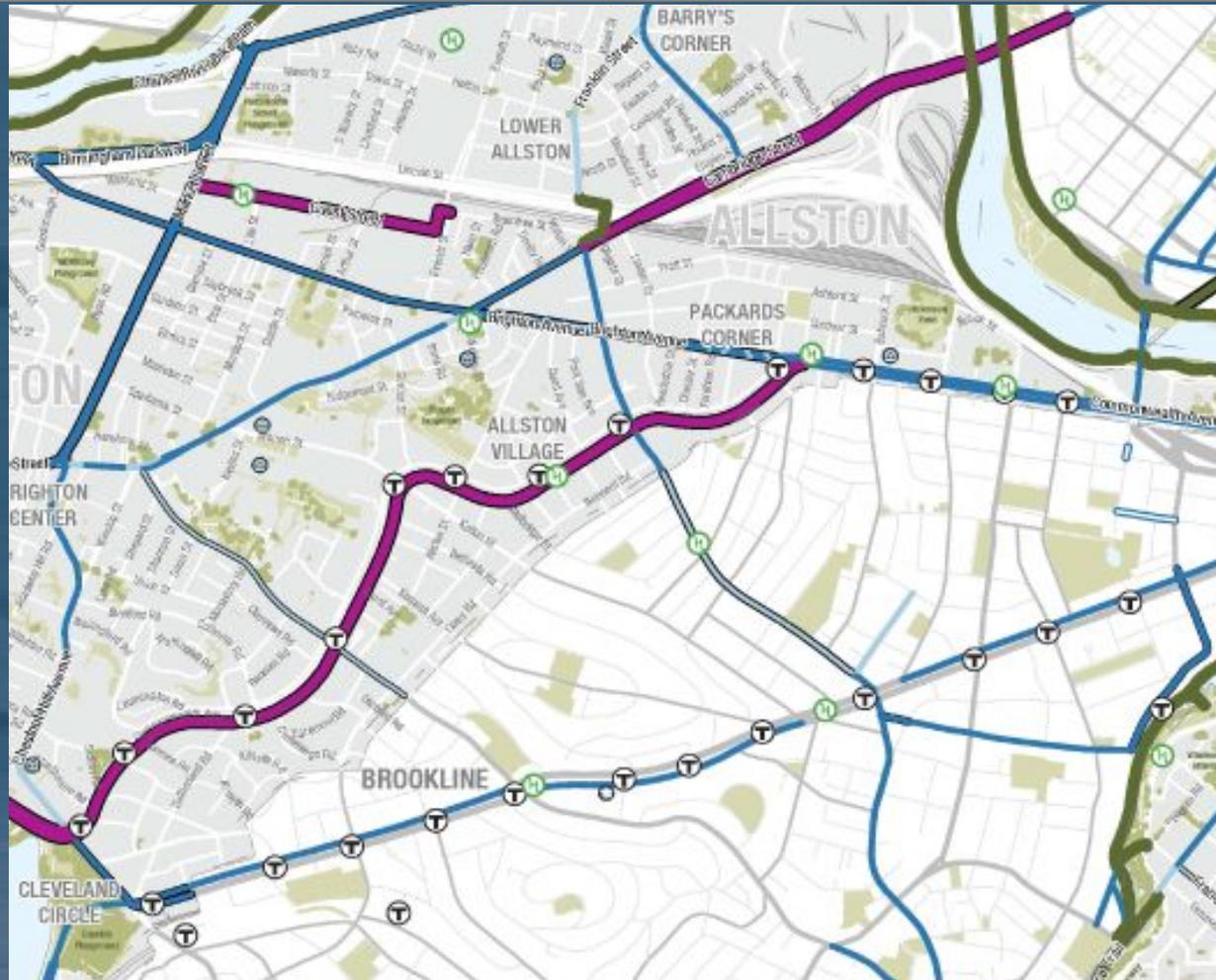
Outbound Track:

- Constrained by Carriage Road
- Existing platforms already encroach several feet
- New or upgraded platforms will be 3' +/- wider

Maintain this curb “as-is” for this project



Boston Bike Network Facilities – 5 year plan



**Comm. Ave
is critical
corridor:
*Project must
provide high
quality
bicycle
facility***

Basic Cross-Section: *Bicycles / Carriage Roads*

- Considered various types and locations for primary bicycle facility
- The Carriage Roads appear to work well for the most part (low speed, low volume, intuitively connected at either end of project)
 - Considered shared use with conflict mitigation
 - Considered separated cycle tracks/buffered bike lanes
 - Head-in angle parking presents conflicts in either case



OUTBOUND



INBOUND

Basic Cross-Section: *Bicycles / Carriage Roads*

- One-way cycle track concept
- Issues include “new” conflicts at each end, and left turns out of Carriage Road



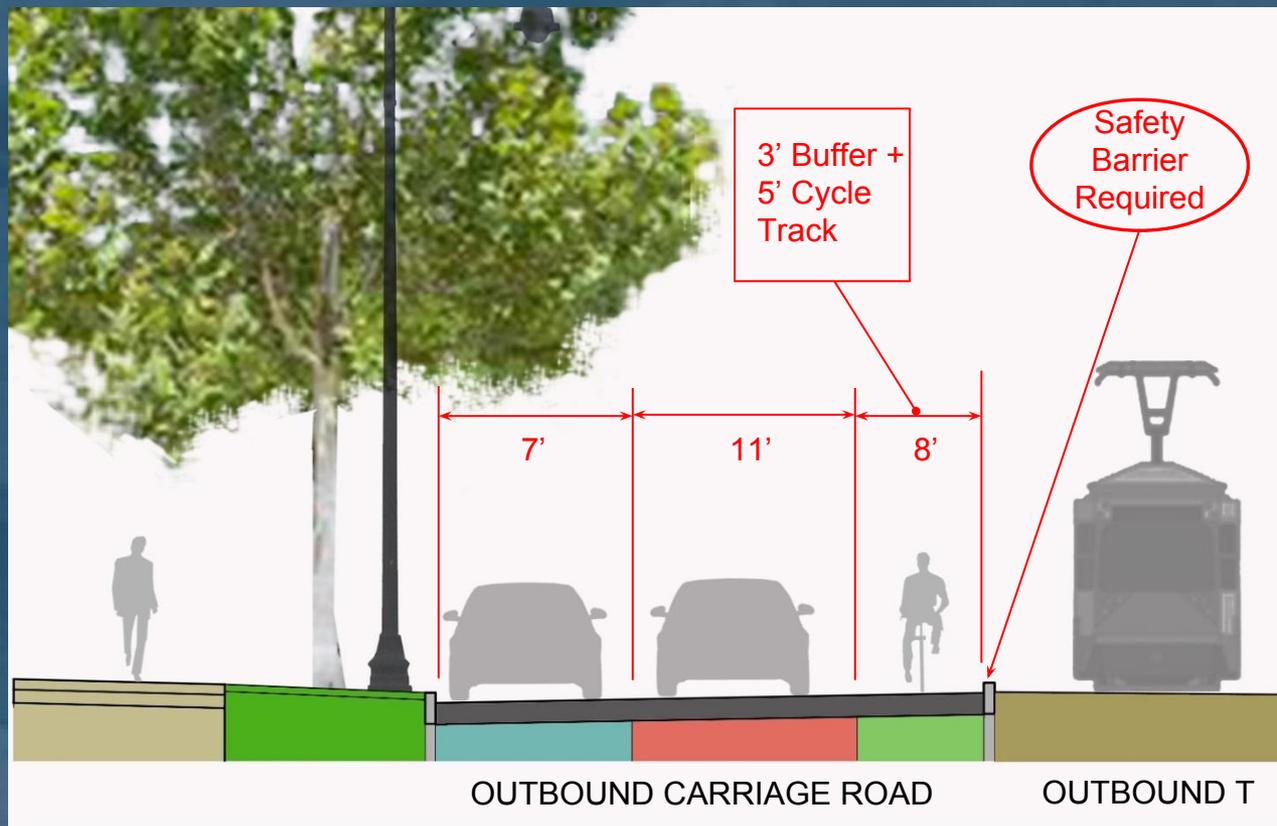
OUTBOUND



INBOUND

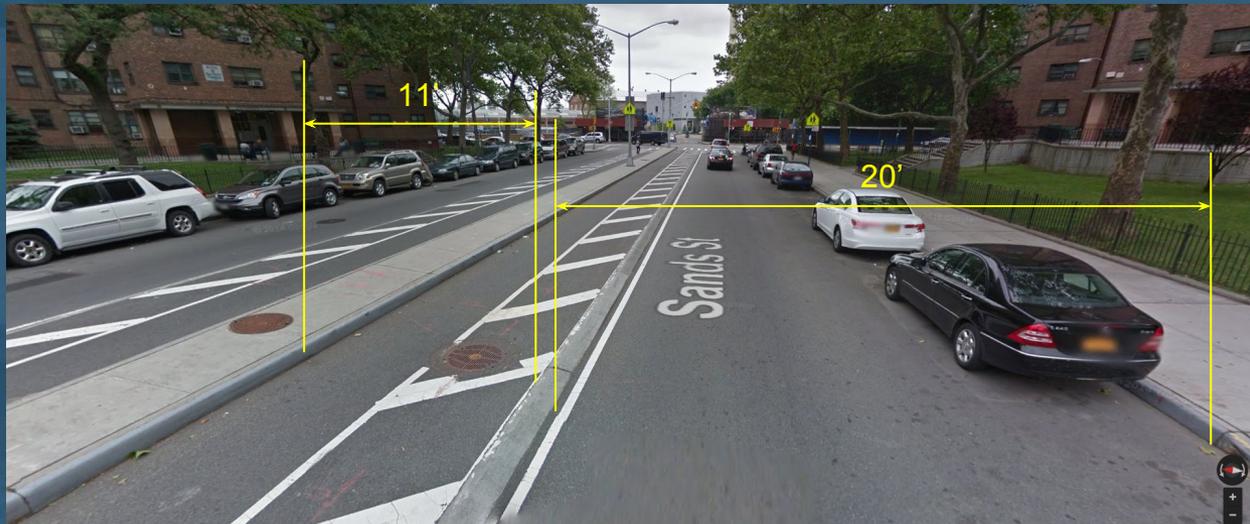
Basic Cross-Section: *Bicycles / Carriage Roads*

– Carriage Road / Cycle Track Design Concept



Basic Cross-Section: *Bicycles / Carriage Roads*

- Cycle Track Design Example – *Sands Street, Brooklyn, NY*
 - Width accommodates standard street plows
 - Mountable curb



- Comm Ave space is narrower
- Need to discuss mountable versus totally flush

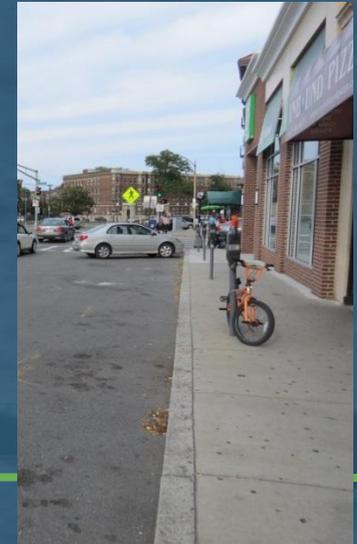
Basic Cross-Section: *Bicycles / Carriage Roads*

- Cycle track not compatible with “left side” parking in the Carriage Road
- Concept eliminates most left-side parking from corridor
- Consistent with goal of “re-greening” corridor and consistent with other City streets



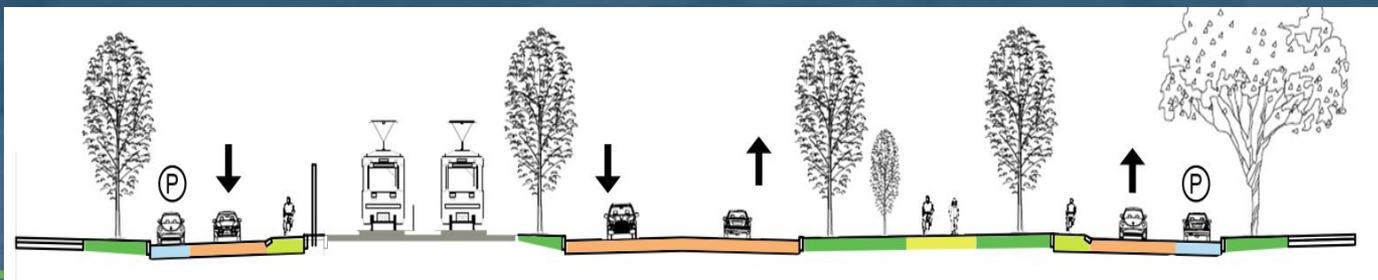
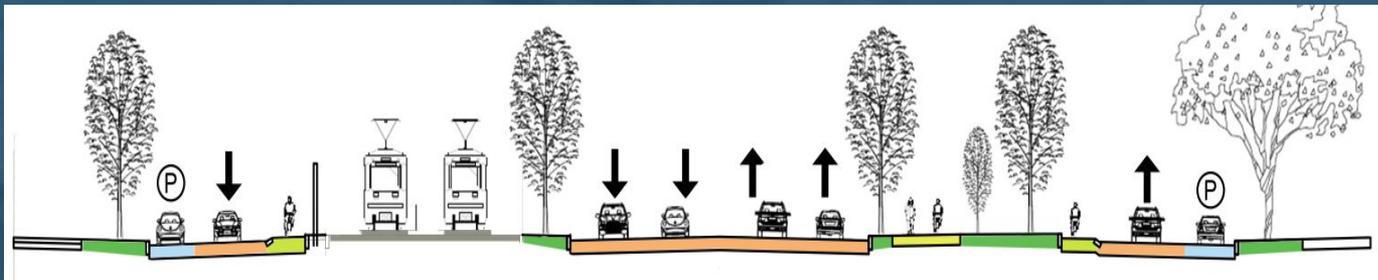
Basic Cross-Section: *Pedestrians and Accessibility*

- Pedestrian location in cross-section same as today; ensure consistent 10' min. sidewalk
- Major pedestrian improvements will be achieved:
 - From intersection and accessibility improvements
 - From providing additional accessible crossings
 - From restoration of consistent green edge adjacent to consistent and accessible sidewalks



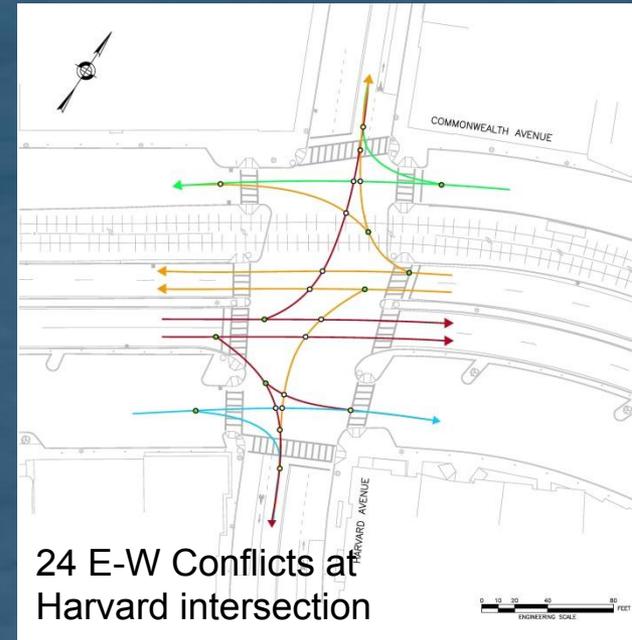
Basic Cross-Section: *Vehicles*

- Studied several configurations, including reducing main line from 4 lanes to 2
- Recommended maintaining 4 lanes:
 - Operational flexibility including winter
 - More signal time available for pedestrians
 - Consistency with adjacent segments = safety



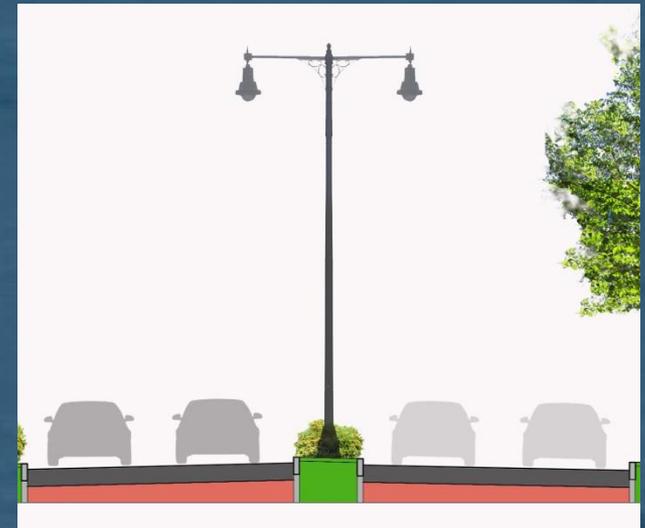
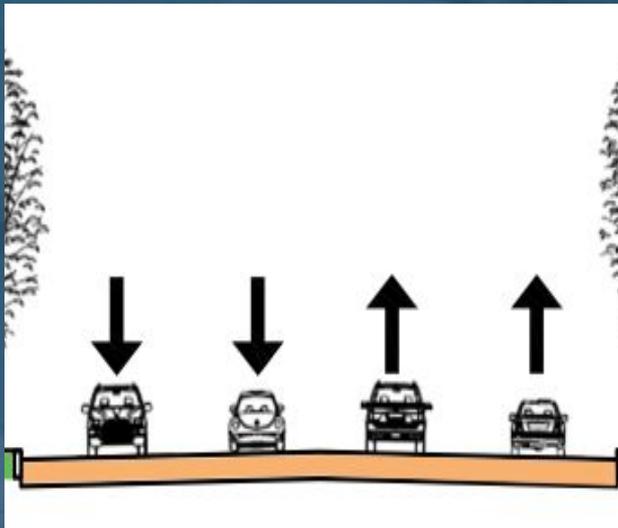
Basic Cross-Section: *Vehicles*

- Recommend left-turn lanes at major intersections:
 - Reduces multimodal conflicts; increases pedestrian crossing opportunities and safety



Basic Cross-Section: *Vehicles*

- Recommend retaining vehicular median:
 - Controls unwanted/unsafe left and U-turns
 - Difficult to light the road without median due to MBTA
 - Provides formal pedestrian refuge at key locations

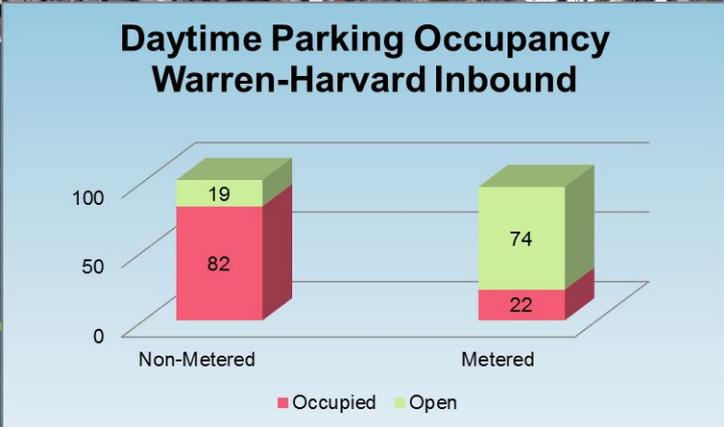
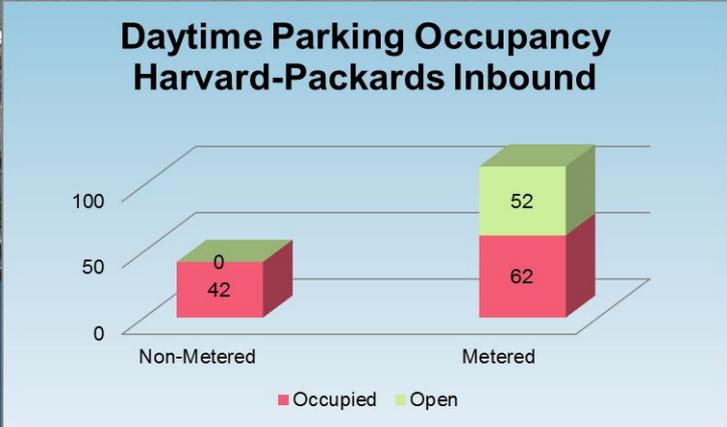
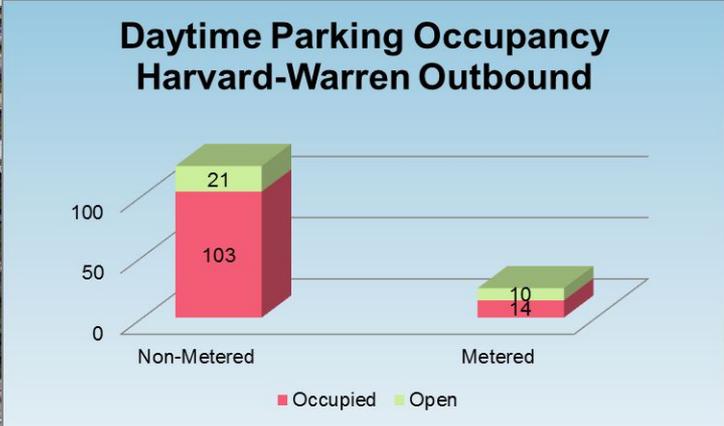
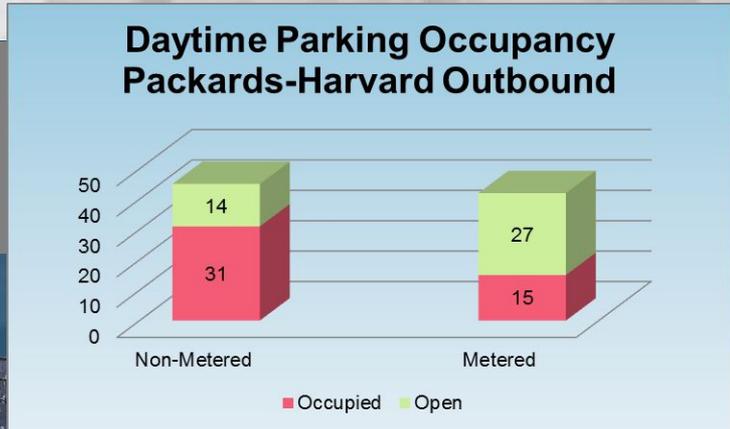


Basic Cross-Section: *Parking / Loading*

- Left-side parking: not compatible with cycle tracks or Olmsted Boulevard concept
- Right Side: replace angle parking with parallel parking
 - Consistent with other City streets, and consistent with historic landscape and greening goals

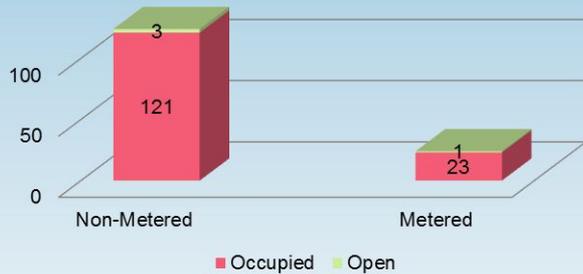


Parking Snapshot (July 2015 - Day)

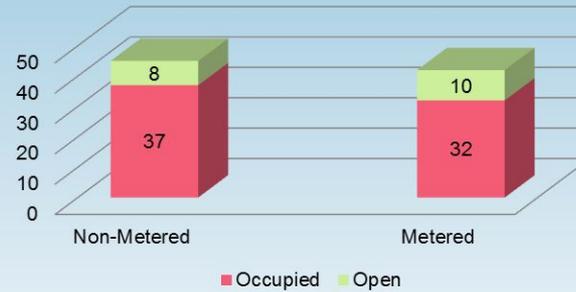


Parking Snapshot (July 2015 - Night)

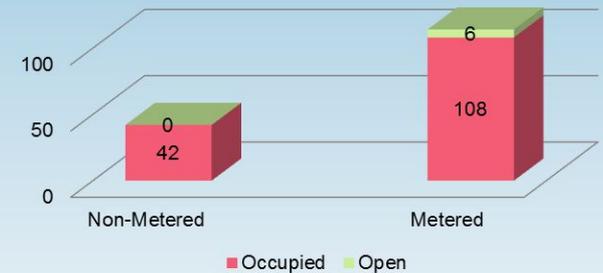
Nighttime Parking Occupancy Harvard-Warren Outbound



Nighttime Parking Occupancy Packards-Harvard Outbound



Nighttime Parking Occupancy Harvard-Packards Inbound



Nighttime Parking Occupancy Warren-Harvard Inbound



Basic Cross-Section: *Landscape/Urban Design*

- Restoration of planted edges envisioned by Olmsted



VS.



Basic Cross-Section: *Landscape/Urban Design*

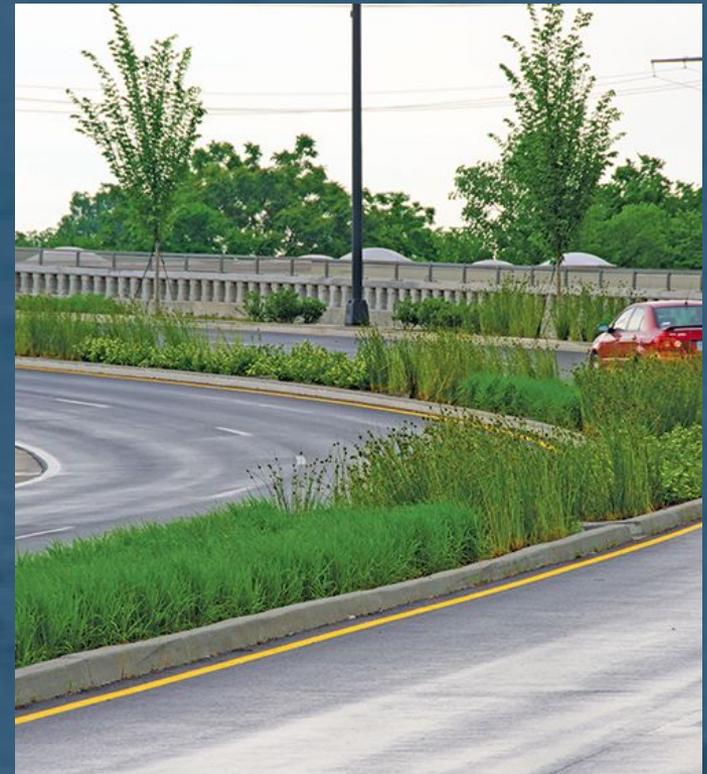
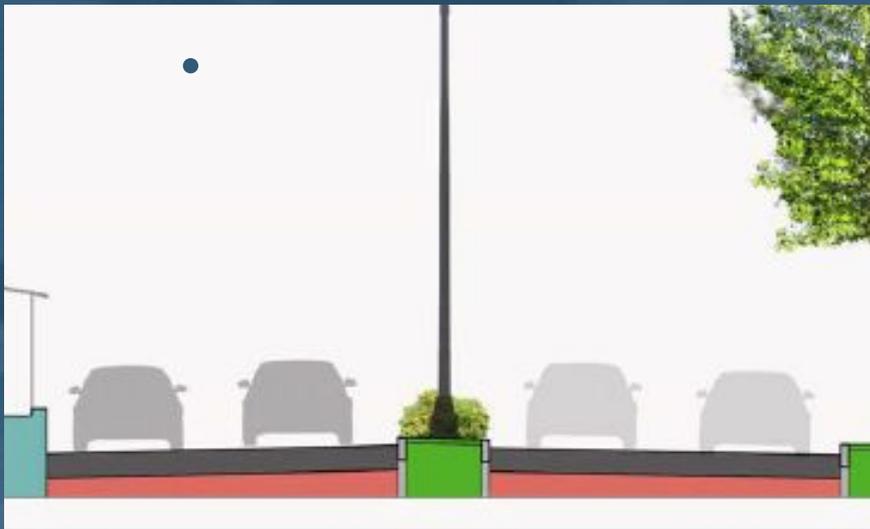
- Proposed planting along MBTA*
 - MBTA concerns with trees/leaves on tracks
 - Historically was a tree planted edge
 - Helps give definition to roadway



* Contingent on PWD securing a maintenance agreement

Basic Cross-Section: *Landscape/Urban Design*

- Proposed planting within roadway median*
 - Helps control jaywalking
 - Potential stormwater feature



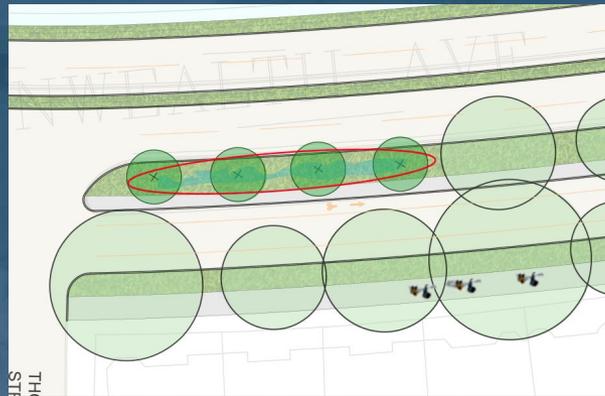
* Contingent on PWD securing a maintenance agreement

Basic Cross-Section: *Landscape/Urban Design*

- Restoration of planted “Boulevard” medians envisioned by Olmsted



VS.



Basic Cross-Section: Preserve Existing Trees



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE TREE INVENTORY



Basic Cross-Section: Preserve Existing Trees

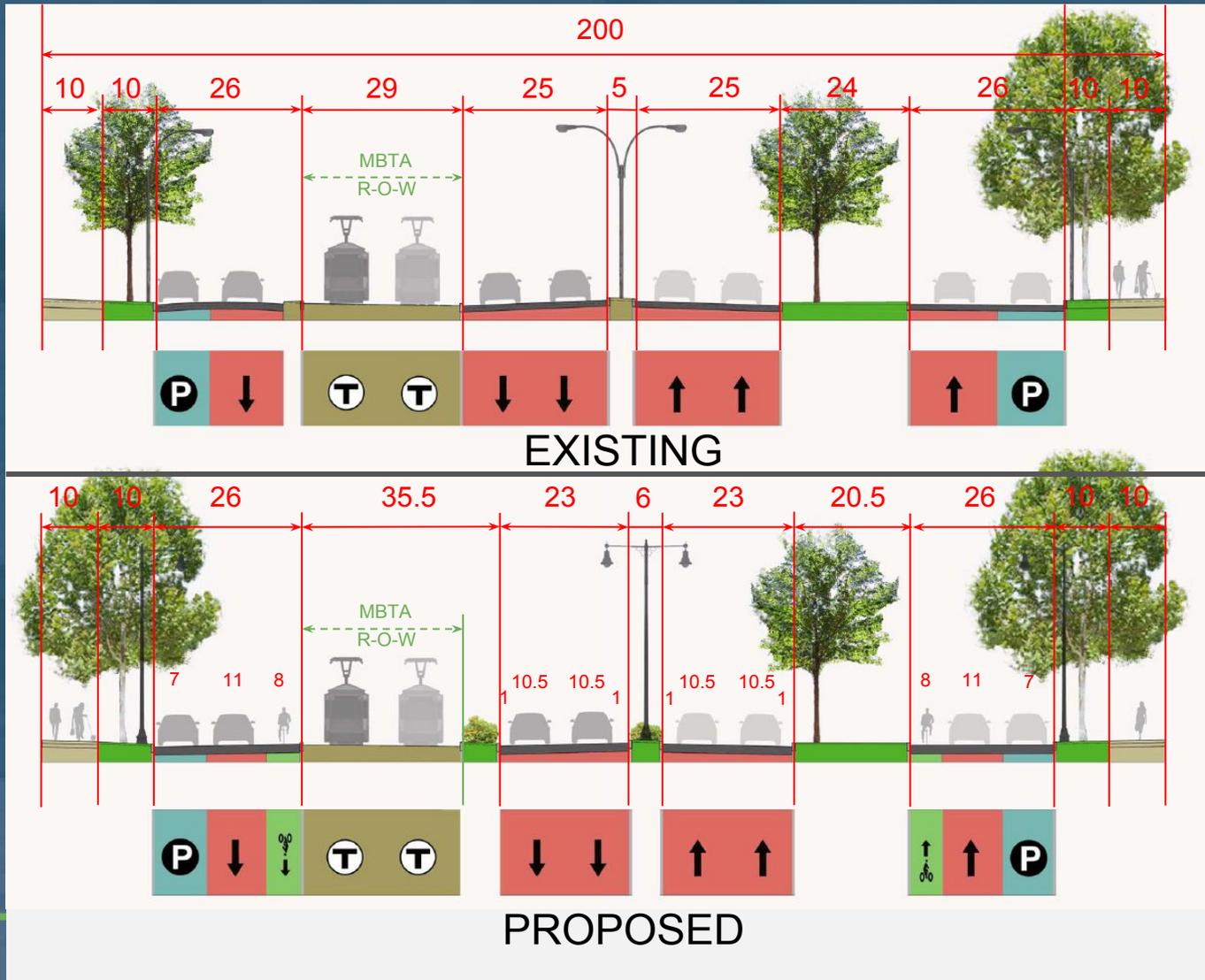


- Preservation of Healthy Trees along the Corridor

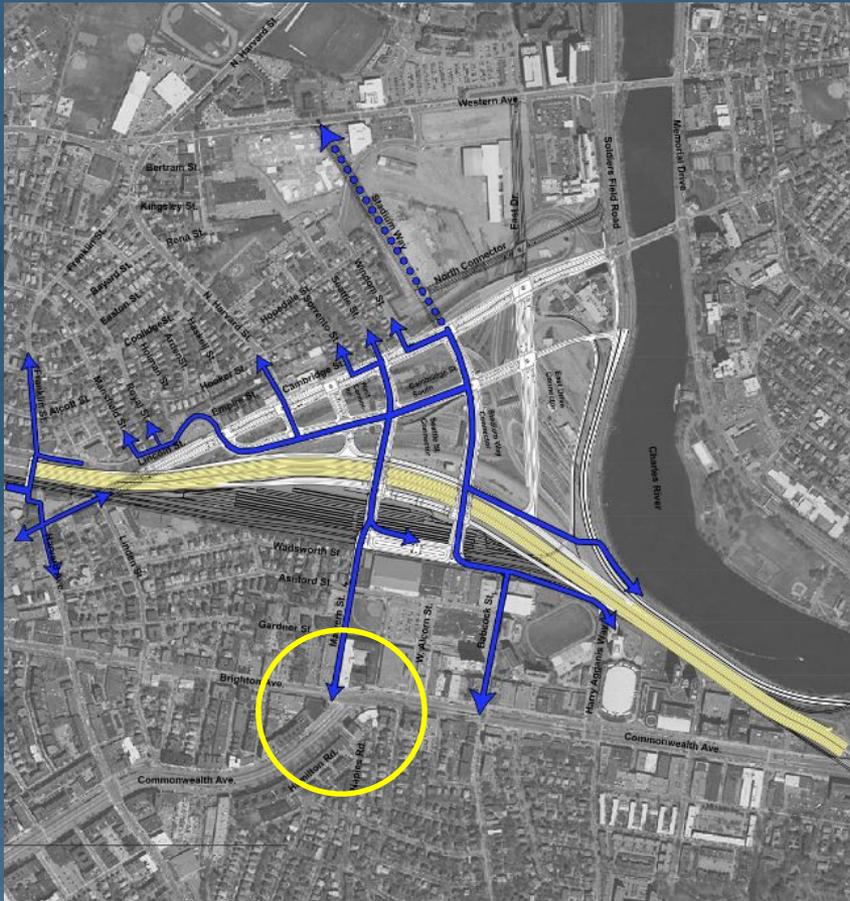


- Preservation of Healthy Trees along both Carriage Roads

Basic Cross-Section: *Putting it All Together* (looking east – dimensions in feet)

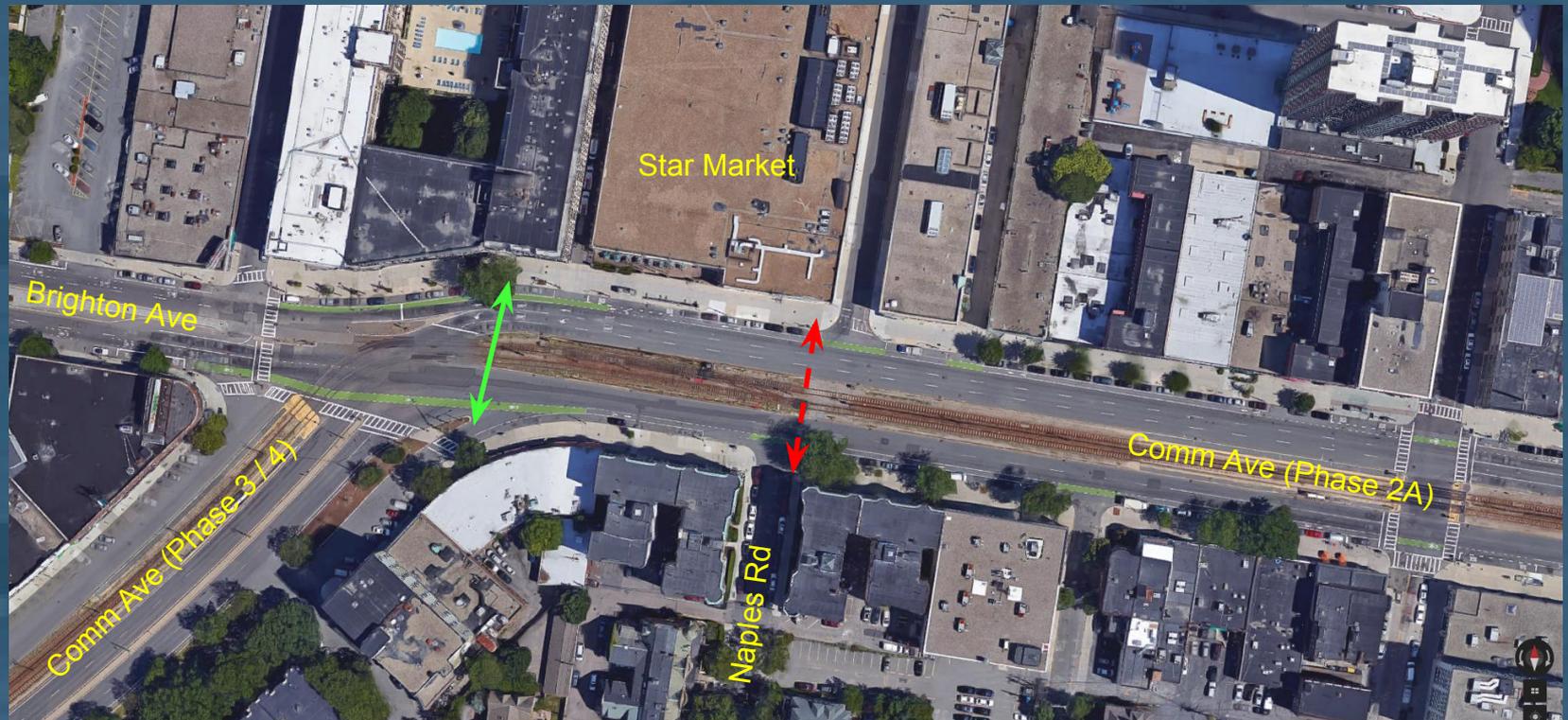


Key Intersections: *Packard's Corner*



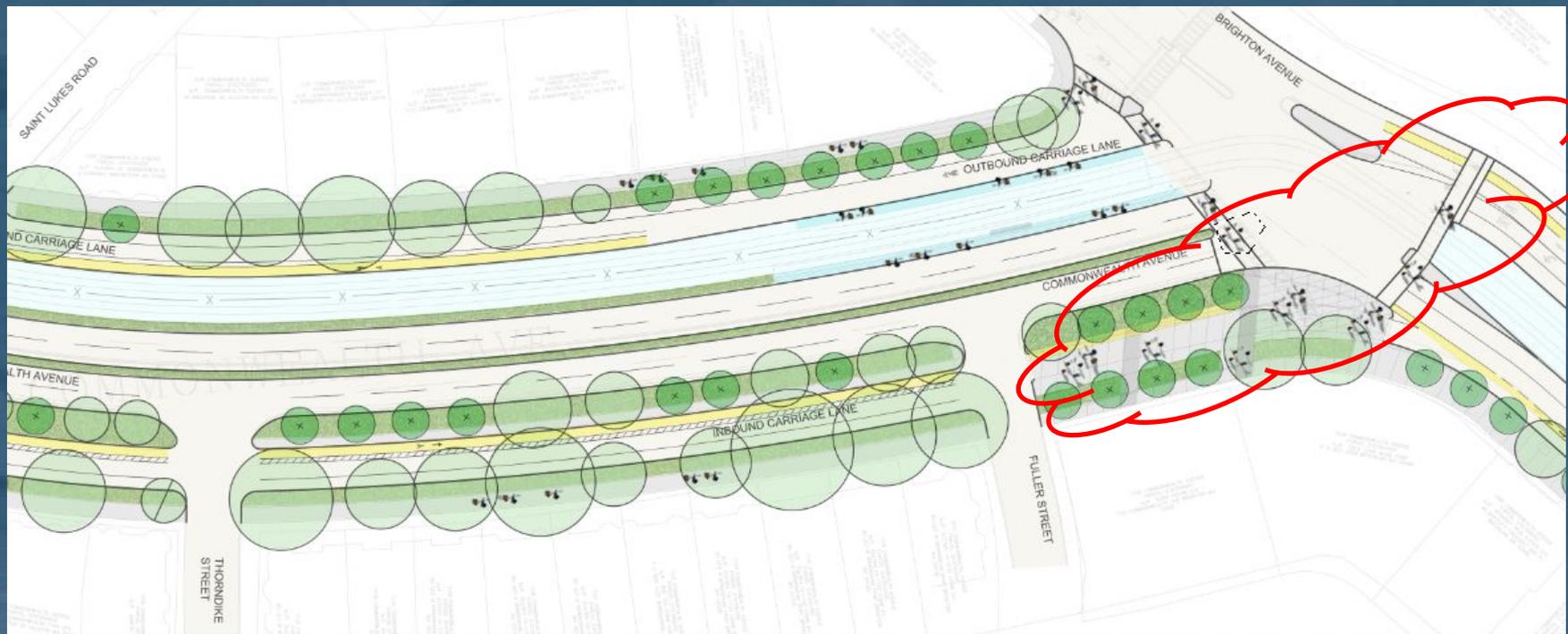
- Complicated Location
- Importance for Peds/Bikes Grows as a result of I-90 Redevelopment

Key Intersections: *Packard's Corner*

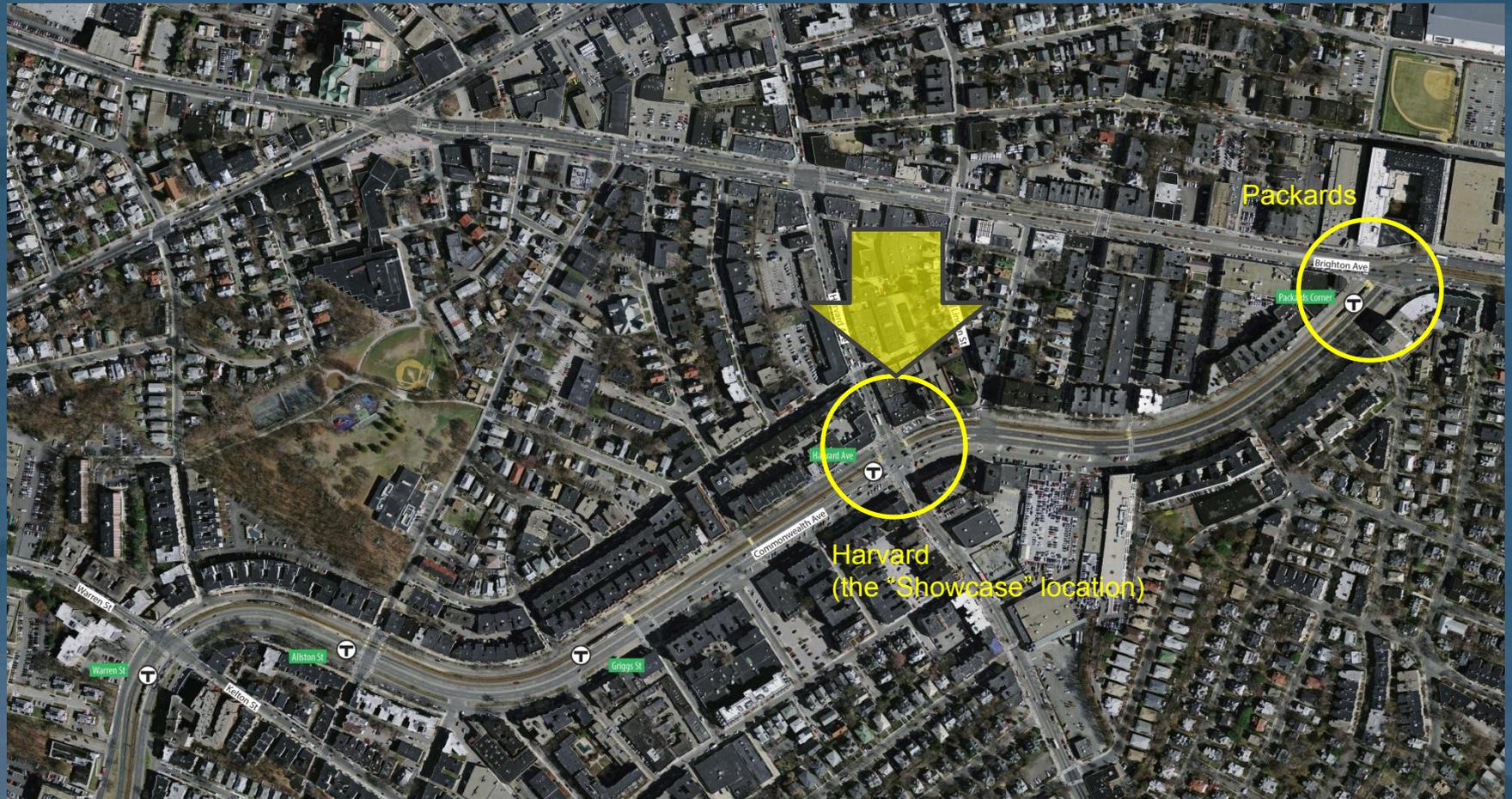


- Community Desire for Mid-Block Crosswalk at Naples in 2A
- Provide “Missing” Crosswalk at Packards instead

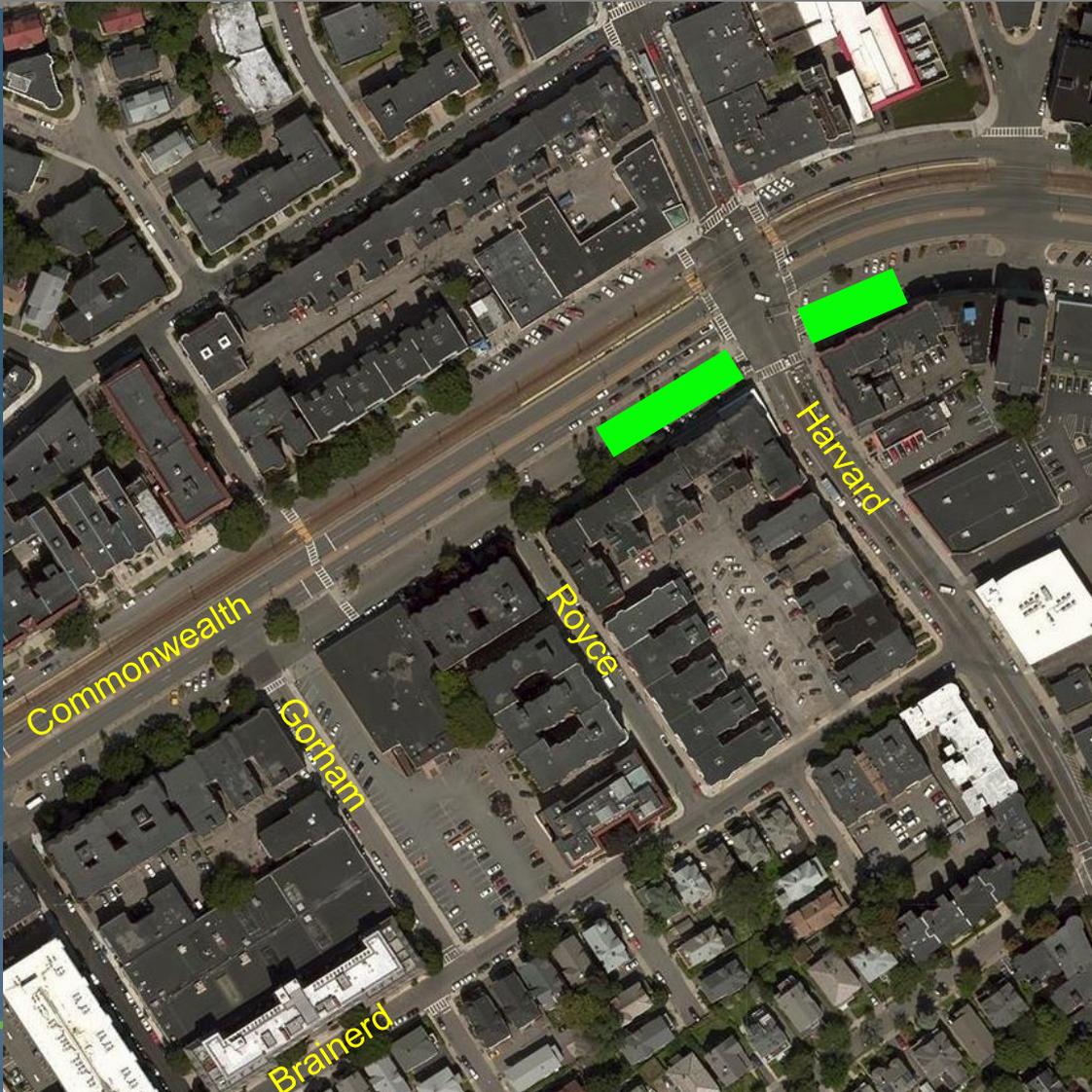
Key Intersections: *Packard's Corner*



Key Intersections



Key Intersections: *Harvard Avenue*



- Core Idea: Truncate Carriage Roads at Intersection
- Provides significant programmable space – a real “there” there
- Major safety improvement (simplifies intersection and reduces conflicts)

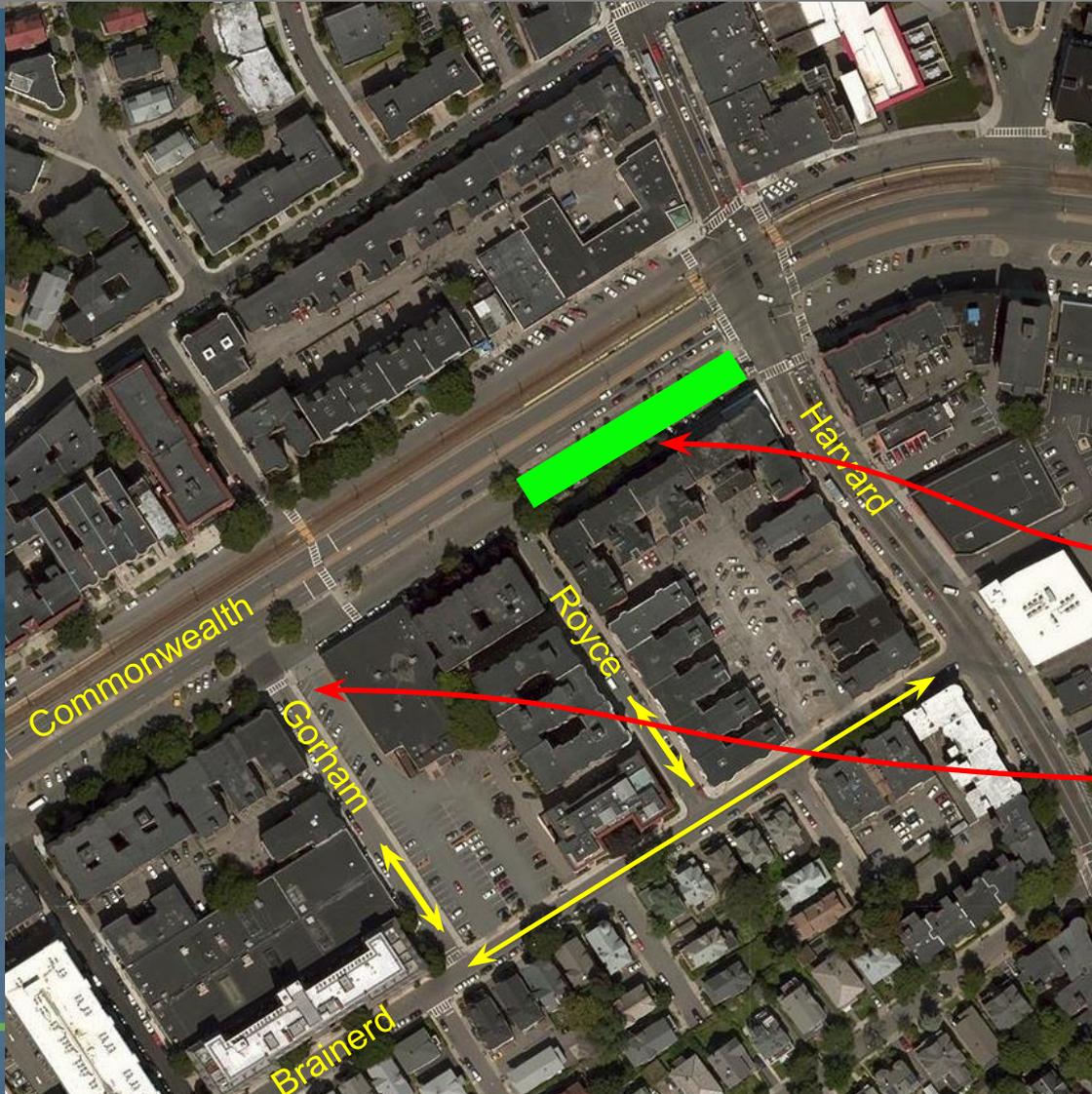
Key Intersections: *Harvard Avenue*

- Initial concept of truncating carriage road prior to intersection



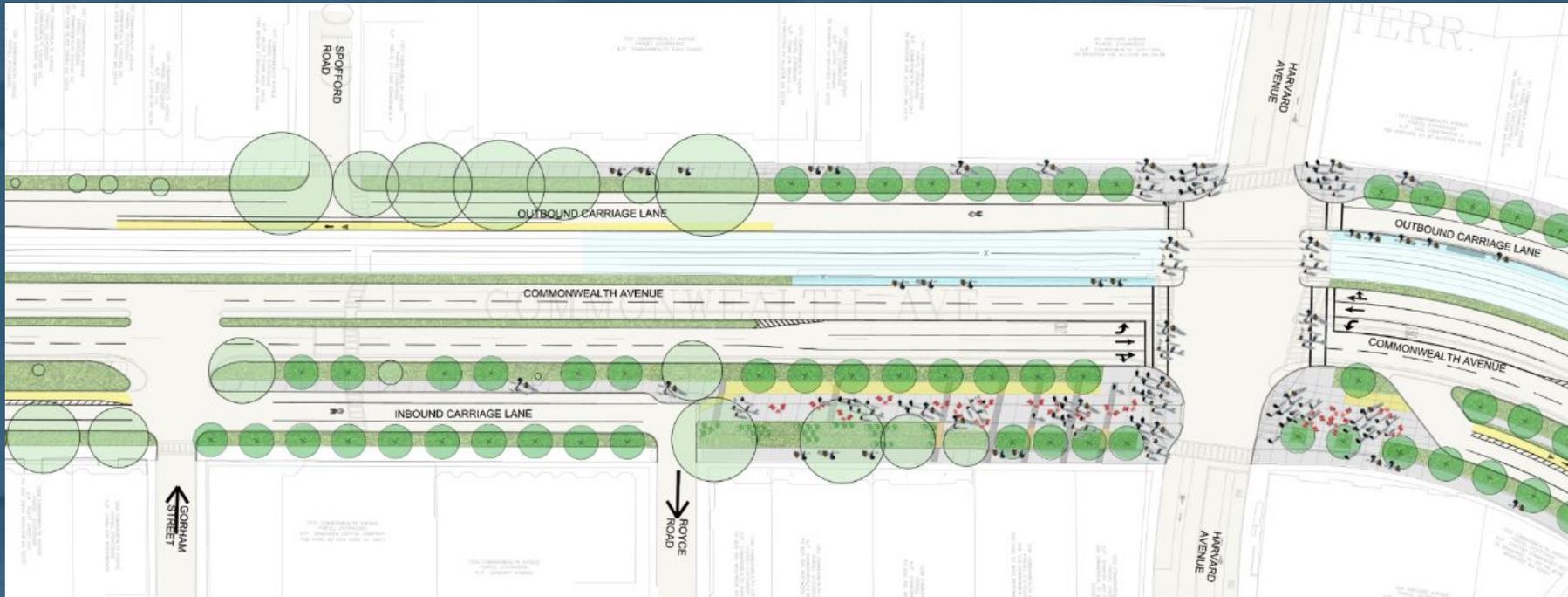
Entry too close to intersection

Key Intersections: *Harvard Avenue*



- Reversing Gorham and Royce allows Carriage Road truncation at Royce
- Design must still allow for emergency and delivery access
- Mitigates safety issue at CVS driveway

Key Intersections: *Harvard Avenue*



– Design must allow emergency and service access

Harvard Intersection: A new neighborhood center



DISCUSSION

